

**Imagery****ACADEMIC VOCABULARY**

**sensory details:** words a writer uses to appeal to the senses—sight, sound, touch, smell, taste—so that readers form images in their minds

**image:** a picture or other sensation that the reader forms in his or her mind based on the sensory detail(s) provided by the writer

**imagery:** a collection of sensations, or images

**HERE'S HOW**

**Step 1: Be aware of which senses are affected by the work.** Notice which sights, sounds, sensations, smells, or tastes form in your mind.

**Step 2: Identify the words that create each sensation or image.** Ask: What did the author get me to see, hear, feel, smell, and taste?

**Step 3: Explain how the images create meaning.** Tell what these particular words make you *think* of or *feel*.

**EXAMPLE: IMAGERY**

Above plains and prairies, the sun blazed out of an ever blue sky, baking fields and withering crops. Ponds and streams dried up. Rivers shrank. In places the very earth cracked open as underground water supplies dwindled away.

Farther west, forests were tinder dry. Sometimes skies grew dark with storm clouds. Thunder growled and lightning crackled, but little rain fell. Lightning strikes started forest fires that raged across the Rockies and other ranges with the roar of jumbo jets on take-off. Night skies turned red and yellow where flames soared 300 feet into the air. Smoke, carried on the winds, darkened skies as far away as Spokane and Minneapolis—St. Paul. Airline passengers, flying high above the forest, could smell the smoke. Before the rains and snows of autumn came, 2,600,000 acres had burned in the West and Alaska, an area twice the size of Delaware.

—Patricia Lauber, *Summer of Fire*

**appeals to sight:** “ever blue sky”; “skies grew dark with storm clouds”; “Night skies turned red and yellow”; “Smoke . . . darkened skies”

**appeals to touch:** “baking fields and withering crops”; “earth cracked open”; “tinder dry”

**appeals to sound:** “Thunder growled and lightning crackled”; “forest fires that raged . . . with the roar of jumbo jets on take-off”

**appeal to smell:** “Airline passengers . . . could smell the smoke”

**meaning communicated by the images:** Extreme dry conditions caused fires, which devastated the environment in many ways.